To Whom it May Concern:

   My name is Andrew Salamon, I live in La Mesa California and I am a citizen of the United States of America. I have been a professional computer programmer since 1995 and for the first five of those years I was writing what most people call 'mission critical' software for very large organizations: financial, accounting and personnel applications. Eight months ago I left the financial industry and took the Chief Software Engineer position at Nisus Software Inc., whose main product is a Macintosh word processor called Nisus Writer.

   Nisus Software has been around for over fourteen years. I don't know too much about the company's history, but I do know that in the past they were much larger than they are today. I can't honestly claim that their smaller size is entirely due to 'unfair competition' from Microsoft, but that would certainly seem like a good bet.

   I would like to bring up one problem that falls within my area of expertise. Nisus Software gets a lot of complaints along the lines of: "I need to send a file to a co-worker (or colleague, or friend), but they can't read it because they use MS Word!" or "Someone sent me this .doc (MS Word) file, and when I try to open it in Nisus Writer, it just looks like garbage!". A fair number of these complaints end with, "Well, I'd love to use Nisus Writer but I can't because I need to work with people using MS Word."

   Ever since I've started working for Nisus, one of my co-workers has been working on that problem. Specifically, there is a file format called RTF (Rich Text Format) that many different word processors can use. Unfortunately, RTF is not an open standard, it was created by Microsoft. The documentation is difficult to find and even harder to understand. What's more, it is a moving target and Microsoft's own products rarely adhere to the publicly available information. Documents saved as RTF files by Nisus Writer often show up as garbage text in MS Word, or sometimes even crash it, despite our best efforts to make the document adhere to the 'published' standard.

   Even if RTF were an open standard, however, it would not completely solve the problem of interoperability because it is an intermediate format that is not 'native' to either Nisus Writer or MS Word (or many other other word processors). This means that there will always be a chance of losing data or formatting information when transferring files.

   I am not a lawyer but based on my reading of the currently proposed penalty in the Microsoft anti-trust case as well as the commentary of others (including the Electronic Frontier Foundation's legal staff) I would say that there will be no substantial change in the way Microsoft does business given the current settlement.

Andrew M. Salamon
Chief Software Engineer, Nisus Software, Inc.